FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVITIES

FIREWORKS, BARBECUES AND MORE. PAGE 22

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Prideful pioneers

Equality. Metro spoke with the driving force behind a Supreme Court decision to legalize gay marriage in all 50 states. PAGE 02

Famous local drag queen Morgan Wills rides in a convertible at the 2014 Philly Pride Day parade celebrating LGBT people and culture in Center City. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

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Obergefell: 'Still coming to grips' with being icon

Speaking out. The plaintiff in the landmark Supreme Court decision on marriage equality is in Philly today.

Jim Obergefell won a landmark Supreme Court decision last week to allow same-sex marriages across the U.S. Visit Metro.us to read more about him. / GETTY IMAGES

"When I heard the decision, I cried and immediately thought of John," Jim Obergefell, 49, said after hearing Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy read his ruling in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges.

Jim, an openly gay real estate salesman from Ohio, was the plaintiff in the landmark decision granting the constitutional right to marriage for same-sex couples in all 50 states.

Obergefell and his husband, John Arthur, were partners for 21 years before legally marrying on the BMI Airport tarmac in 2013. The couple had raised $13,000 in support from friends and family to help legalize their union outside of Ohio's statewide ban.

Tragically, 100 days later, John would die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Ohio's denial of Jim's request to have his name on John's death certificate as the surviving spouse sparked the historical case.

"Things exploded," Jim described after the Supreme Court's decision last Friday. "I have hundreds of emails, text messages and 400 Facebook notifications I'm still getting caught up on."

In addition to President Barack Obama personally calling him to thank him for his efforts in helping making the ruling possible, he has been nationally considered a gay rights icon by various groups and social media.

On Thursday, Jim will launch the National LGBT 50th Anniversary Celebration in Philly (July 2-5) by laying a wreath at the Gay Pioneers historic marker directly across the street from Independence Hall and Liberty Bell Center.

The ceremonious occasion commemorates the organized LGBT civil rights movement that was galvanized when activists from major East Coast cities, including Philadelphia, would use Independence Hall as a public demonstration site each Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969.

In 1965, when 40 of the activists picketed in front of Independence Hall, they organized the largest demonstration for gay equality in world history up to that point.

But although Jim understands the context of being labeled a hero "on an intellectual level," he is "still coming to grips on an emotional level."

"I'm very humble and grateful to be invited and celebrated in Philly among very notable LGBT leaders and icons … but it's a weird thing to be told," Obergefell said. "I was just being true to myself and reminding myself that I was fighting the right fight."

Quoted

"I just want people to understand that LGBT Americans are no different from straight Americans. We're no different in how we expect our government and laws to respect us." Obergefell

ERNEST OWENS
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Fourth of July. 50th anniversary of LGBT rights battle

Before there was Stonewall, there was Philadelphia.

This Fourth of July is the 50th anniversary of the true start of the LGBT Civil Rights Movement – and a four-day observance and celebration will get underway Thursday in the birthplace of American freedom.

A full four years before LGBT New Yorkers made history by fighting back against NYPD harassment in Greenwich Village in 1969, activists staged a historic act of defiance at Independence Hall.

A group calling itself the Eastern Conference of Homophile Organizations picked the then-home of the Liberty Bell to begin what would become yearly marches — called "Annual Reminders" — to demand equal rights and an end to discrimination.

At the first Annual Reminder on July 4, 1965, 40 men and women dressed up in their finest hoisted picket signs. These 40 protestors became part of the largest gay rights demonstration at that time.

"Forty demonstrators with men in suits and ties and women in dresses carried picketing signs for equality," according to Malcolm Lazin, executive director of the Equality Forum.

"Those 40 picketers were the largest gay demonstration in world history. ... By the 1969 Annual Reminder, the numbers swelled to 150 equality picketers."

Among these Gay Pioneers, as they are called, were New Yorkers Frank Kameny, who died in 2011, and Barbara Gittings, who passed in 2007.

Those two activists were instrumental in organizing the first NYC Gay Pride March in 1970.

JOHN A. OSWALD

Online

The four-day National LGBT 50th Anniversary Celebration and Ceremony is filled with seminars, lectures, art and parties. A full schedule can be found at lgbt50.org.

The gay rights demonstration in Philadelphia on July 4, 1965. / LGBT50.ORG/PRESS

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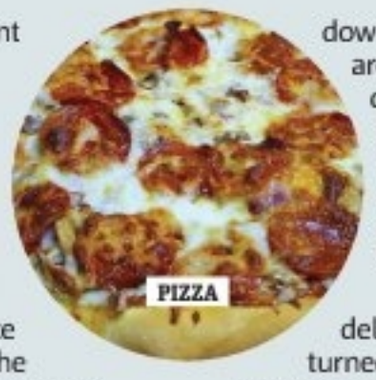
Stolen slices

Cops seek six suspects who stole Domino's deliveryman's pizza

Police have released surveillance footage of a group of suspects tailing a Domino's pizza deliveryman in a bid to catch the alleged pizza thieves.



The incident occurred on June 19 at 8:35 p.m. on 8th Street between South and Lombard streets.

Surveillance video shows the group of six attackers tailing the Domino's pizza deliveryman as he walks down the block around the corner from a nearby Domino's pizza shop at 7th and South streets.

As the deliveryman turned onto Lombard Street, he was jumped from behind. Surveillance video shows the attackers running away carrying a pizza bag.

The deliveryman sustained minor lacerations to his elbow, according to police.

Tipsters can dial 215-686-TIPS (8477) or text a tip to PPDTIP, 773847, or contact Det. Babb from South Detective Division at 215-686-3013.

See video of the attack below. SAM NEWHOUSE

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A collapsed ceiling at the Bayard Taylor Annex and toilets at Dimner Beeber Junior High. / COURTESY OF CONTROLLER'S OFFICE

City schools dangerous, bathrooms are worse

Uninhabitable. Inspection by City Controller finds third-world conditions.

The bathrooms at Philadelphia public schools are not up to first-world standards, the direct result of cost cutting at the School District of Philadelphia, City Controller Alan Butkovitz said Wednesday.

"They made a conscious decision to leave human waste in a toilet every day," Butkovitz said. "When you are charged with the protection of children, how can you make that decision?"

Those statements come as the controller's office released a new report on inspections at 20 Philadelphia public schools. That report turned up electrical hazards, water damage and blocked fire exits.

At Francis Scott Key Elementary, staff from the controller's office found exposed asbestos wrapped around a pipe in a hallway where staff and students had direct contact with it.

Fourteen of the schools had electrical hazards — at one school, the inspectors found an open 600-volt electrical closet.

Nineteen of the 20 schools had water damage, including moldy ceiling tiles and flooded mechanical rooms due to broken equipment.

And at 15 of the 20 schools, inspectors found fire hazards, including large objects blocking fire exits, missing fire exit signs and fire extinguishers that were expired, missing or not adequately charged.

The findings are likely representative of conditions at all of the district's schools, said Deputy Controller John Thomas.

Butkovitz said he was unsurprised by the findings, because the district had done little in response to his 2008 report and didn't respond to emergency notifications his office made on this most recent round of inspections.

But he said he didn't recall the bathrooms being so bad. He said at the district's flagship Julia R. Masterman magnet school, janitorial services had been limited to one day per week.

"That isn't something that happens in a first-world public facility," Butkovitz said. "It's totally unacceptable."

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Harrisburg. What you need to know about the state budget

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf on Tuesday vetoed the budget passed by the Republican-dominated legislature, saying that it was laden with "gimmicks" that would expand the state's deficit by $3 billion.

Republicans, for their part, say their budget contains no new tax increases, while directing an additional $200 million toward education.

Wolf, in particular, wants bigger increases in education funding — he rode to office on a tide of anger over predecessor Tom Corbett's school funding cuts.

Under Gov. Corbett, the state had four consecutive years of on-time budgets. But before that, Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell famously sparred with the GOP, missing budget deadlines by months.

"This is a return to a pattern last time we had a divided government," said Mark Price, a labor economist for the Keystone Research Center.

The bottom line: The longer this goes, the bigger the effects.

DAN KELLEY

Short-term

In the near term, government will go on as if nothing ever happened.

- Departments can pay vendors with leftover funds.
- Benefits like WIC and Medicare and social and medical service programs won't be cut.
- The state will continue to pay for items essential to public safety, like prisons and state parks.
- Employees will also continue to get paid.

Police will ID officers who fire their weapons

Transparency. The new policy is based on federal recommendations.

Officers from the 19th District at roll call. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, in a memo sent yesterday to the Philadelphia Police Department's commanding officers (which City Paper has obtained), announced that the department will immediately begin disclosing the names of officers who discharge their firearms in officer-involved shootings (OISs) "within seventy-two (72) hours of the incident."

According to the memo, the decision "is in keeping with recommendations" from the Department of Justice's Collaborative Reform and Presidential Task Force reports.

The Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services began studying the Philadelphia Police Department's use of deadly force in 2013, at Ramsey's request, and released the initial report of its findings in March.

Among many items, Department of Justice officials found that no police unit investigating officer-involved shootings (there are two, one for fatal and one for nonfatal shootings) "has specialized training or experience in investigating OISs or any protocols in place for doing so."

The memo said Philadelphia Police will review each incident to make sure that "no threats are made toward the officer or members of their family prior to the release of this information."

The announcement comes less than a month after the department released the names of the officers involved in the shooting of Brandon Tate-Brown, who was killed by police on Dec. 15, 2014, during a traffic stop.

After nearly six months of public protests, Philadelphia Police released a cache of videos and interviews related to the case via a Dropbox link, though District Attorney Seth Williams has said that the officers responsible for Tate-Brown's death, then-rookie Officers Nicholas Carrelli and Heng Dang, will not be charged with murder.

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STOP USING RELIGION TO BE SUCH A BIGOT

If you still don't personally support marriage equality for all Americans, that's fine. The Supreme Court and I both disagree with you, respectfully.

Unfortunately, I knew the landmark decision last Friday would not fare well with many of my Republican colleagues on social media. Some argued that it was politically motivated; others felt it was an obstruction of constitutional principles. Yeah, okay.

Sure, there are tons of ways conservatives tried to mask their saltiness that last week — but liberals still had their field day. But the opposing sides' responses went from mild to bad to downright ugly.

And by ugly, I'm referring to some using the "religious card" to justify being a total bigot.

The pope has finally announced his recent Philadelphia schedule for what the Vatican calls the "2015 Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to the United States of America." In a heartbeat, many online trolls used this moment to call on the pope to "deliver the Gayborhood from being an abomination to the world."

Well, the Gayborhood can be delivered from its sometimes overpriced drinks and exclusionary attitude — but human existence, I think not.

Growing up gay and black, I have far too often seen religion used as an excuse to be malicious. It was abused by white plantation owners and racist clergymen to justify slavery. Today, it is used by homophobes to justify their internal hatred of same-sex love.

Robert Oliver and Mark Heller hold hands, draped in flags, as they celebrate the Supreme Court ruling. / GETTY IMAGES

But I'm not buying it and neither should anyone with a moral compass.

What I found myself doing on social media since the Supreme Court decision was an attempt to defend my existence. Then I looked back at what this country was founded on and realized that I shouldn't explain a damn thing. Religious freedom is the ability to have a different belief and coexist. Christians who are using the pope and other biblical passages as an attempt to institutionally defame my personal choices are infringing upon my inalienable rights.

As we enter Independence Day and the 50th Anniversary of the LGBT civil rights movement this weekend, it's time that we try to settle this beef once and for all. You can be religious and personally dislike someone's dating choices. And that is also something you can respectfully keep to yourself. I will not call out all the hypocrisy and contradiction that can be found within your faith in return. It's quite simple — agree to disagree and keep it moving. At this point, it's not my role or responsibility to keep and maintain anyone else's faith outside of my own. If you consider yourself a true American, you would appreciate that the liberty of being able to make your own decisions doesn't have to be compromised.

Revolutionary history recalls a British ruler who once enforced his religious rule over his people. Our Founding Fathers and colonial ancestors wouldn't be here if they hadn't broken away from such tyranny. Don't be unpatriotic! Learn to live and accept change while staying true to your own values — personally.

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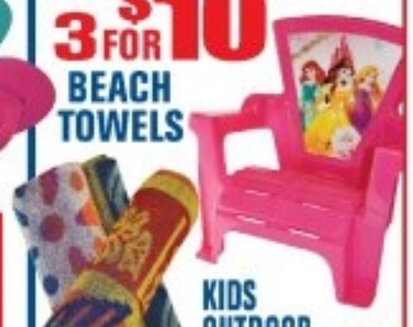

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Drought danger

Human cause suspected in destructive Washington state fire

Investigators suspect human activity, rather than lightning, sparked a grassland fire that has destroyed at least 29 homes near the eastern slopes of the Cascades in central Washington, officials said on Wednesday.

The so-called Sleepy Hollow blaze, which has scorched nearly 3,000 acres since erupting Sunday on a drought-parched hillside west of the city of Wenatchee, continued to smolder as more than 300 firefighters gained ground on the flames.

As of Wednesday, crews had carved containment lines around nearly half the blaze's perimeter and were conducting mop-up operations in areas where flames had been substantially subdued, said Josie Williams, a spokeswoman for the fire command.

She said the tally of residences known to have been lost in the fire had risen to 29, five more than were counted on Tuesday.

Several businesses in downtown Wenatchee, a city of about 33,000 people, also were destroyed or badly damaged, including a recycling center, a farm chemical distributor and two fruit-packing warehouses, officials said.

Although the blaze followed a large number of lightning strikes in the region, investigators have since ruled out lightning as the fire's origin, deeming it to be human-caused instead, said Eileen Ervin, an emergency management official with the Chelan County Sheriff's Office. REUTERS

Quoted

"We've got a long, dry season ahead of us. ... We're hoping to get through the Fourth of July holiday." Williams

Clinton struggled to fit in with Obama's White House, emails suggest

As she campaigns for the Democratic nomination in the November 2016 Presidential election, Clinton's relationship with her fellow Democrats will come under further scrutiny. / GETTY IMAGES

Advice. Clinton corresponded with former advisers to her husband, seeking how to navigate White House.

Hillary Clinton struggled to fit into the government of President Barack Obama after being appointed Secretary of State in 2009, according to emails released by the State Department.

They showed Clinton turning up for meetings that had been canceled and worrying about how much time she had with her new boss, revealing growing pains in the relationship between her and former election rival Obama in the early months of her time as America's top diplomat.

In an email to two aides on June 8, 2009, Clinton was unsure if the White House had held a Cabinet meeting and whether she should attend.

"I heard on the radio that there is a Cabinet mtg this am. Is there? Can I go? If not, who are we sending?" Clinton wrote.

A State Department official wrote back that the government was holding a meeting, but not a full cabinet meeting that she needed to be at.

As Clinton sought to navigate her relationship with the Obama White House, she corresponded with several former aides and advisers to her husband, former President Bill Clinton. REUTERS

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Five things you

1 US, Cuba restoring diplomatic ties after 54 years

The United States and Cuba on Wednesday formally agreed to restore diplomatic ties that had been severed for 54 years, fulfilling a pledge made six months ago by the former Cold War enemies.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro exchanged letters agreeing to reopen embassies in each other's capitals, with the Cubans saying that could happen as soon as July 20.

"This is a historic step forward in our efforts to normalize relations with the Cuban government and people and begin a new chapter with our neighbors in the Americas," Obama said from the White House Rose Garden.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking from Vienna, said he would visit Havana later this summer to raise the U.S. flag outside the U.S. Embassy, currently labeled as the U.S. Interests Section and under the protection of the Swiss government.

Obama and Castro seek to relegate to history 56 years of recriminations that have predominated ever since Fidel Castro's rebels overthrew the U.S.-backed government of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959.

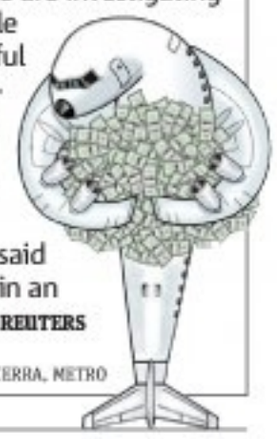
"Cuba is encouraged by the reciprocal intention to develop respectful and cooperative relations between our two peoples and governments," Raul Castro, 84, Fidel's younger brother and Cuban president since 2008, wrote in his letter to Obama. **REUTERS**

2 US probing if airlines collude to keep airfares high

The Justice Department is investigating whether U.S. airlines are working together to keep ticket prices high, spokeswoman Emily Pierce said.

The Associated Press, which broke the story, said that the department was trying to determine whether the airlines were colluding to grow slowly in a bid to keep airfares high.

"We are investigating possible unlawful coordination by some airlines," said Pierce in an email. **REUTERS**



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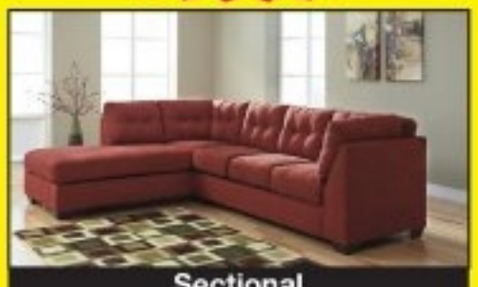

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need to know

White House lifts ban on cameras during tours

The White House lifted a 40-year-old ban on taking photos during public tours of the executive mansion on Wednesday, delighting tourists who immediately began posting pictures on social media.

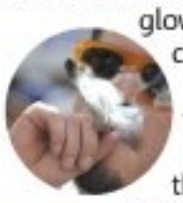
First lady Michelle Obama announced the change in a video on Instagram.

"If you've been on a White House tour, you may have seen this sign," she said, holding up a placard reading, "No photos or social media allowed." "Well, not anymore," Obama said as she tore up the sign, laughing. REUTERS

Crowds count down to pot legalization in Oregon

Crowds counted down the minutes to midnight then lit up joints as smoking marijuana became legal in Oregon on Wednesday, and the legalization movement spread to a fourth state.

Hundreds gathered on the Burnside Bridge in downtown Portland and smoked under the glow of a neon city sign, marking the moment that the law allowed recreational use.



Oregon residents aged 21 and older can now smoke privately, grow up to four plants and possess up to eight ounces at home. REUTERS

TV Land pulls 'Dukes of Hazzard' amid Confederate flag debate

TV Land has pulled reruns of the 1980s sitcom "Dukes of Hazzard," the U.S. cable network said on Wednesday amid controversy over portrayals of the Confederate flag, which is notably featured on the show's "General Lee" vehicle.

Viacom Inc.-owned TV Land declined to comment on why it has pulled the reruns, but there has been growing criticism of displays of the Civil War-era flag in the wake of the shooting of nine black churchgoers in South Carolina last month. REUTERS

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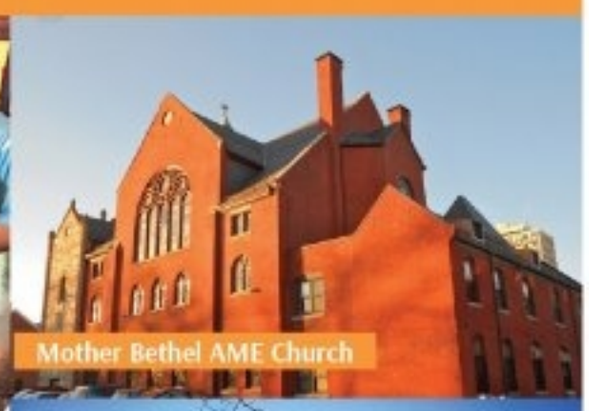
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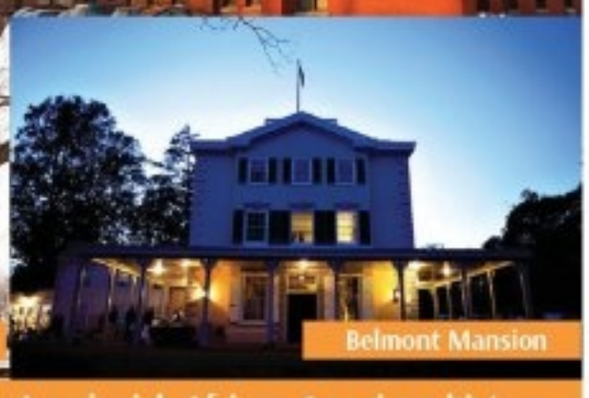
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This week. Top things to read in City Paper

Philly's LGBT community this weekend commemorates the 50th anniversary of one of America's first major gay rights demonstrations. On July 4, 1965, about 40 gay and lesbian Philadelphians held signs demanding equal rights and marched in front of Independence Hall. This week's City Paper cover story recounts that historic march from the eyes of John James, who protested even though he feared it would cost him his job.

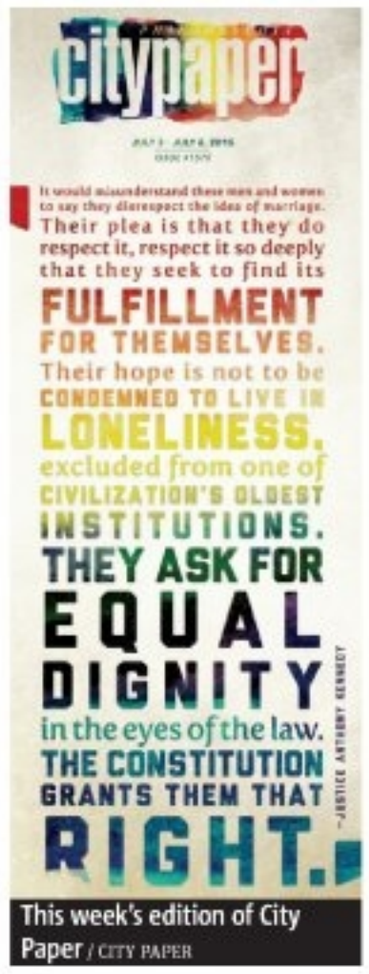
City Paper's coverage also discusses the challenges still facing the LGBT community, especially transgender youth, and the support they're finding at a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia clinic, from the Mazzoni Center's Trans Health Conference and from a gender-themed CD produced by local singer/songwriter Chana Rothman.

Other highlights:

In Arts, five First Friday shows and exhibits get a quick preview. There are a couple in Old City and a couple in the Fishtown/Kensington area, so plan wisely and hit 'em all.

Sex columnist Rachel Kramer Bussel tells the story of the Rev. Bev Dale, who incorporates both sex and God into her life. She says, "There's a lot of people who've dropped out of Christianity, thinking it's irrelevant, [and many] in sexually alternative communities who don't see any connection at all between religion and what they're doing in their sex lives." Dale aims to change that, and help those struggling to reconcile faith and desire.

In the Food section, chef/owner Pierre Calmels is back in the kitchen at popular Bella Vista bistro Bibou.


citypaper
It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its
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FOR THEMSELVES.
Their hope is not to be
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excluded from one of
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THEY ASK FOR
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THE CONSTITUTION
GRANTS THEM THAT
RIGHT.
–JUSTICE ANTHONY KENNEDY
This week's edition of City Paper / CITY PAPER

Restaurant critic Adam Erace digs the revamped French eatery, from the scallop-and-lobster mousse to the succulent rabbit to the orange-perfumed madeleines

Read these stories and more at City Paper or on citypaper.net

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Donald dumped. Macy's becomes latest to cut ties with Trump

Department store Macy's said that it would end its business relationship with Donald Trump, becoming the latest company to sever ties with the real estate developer and TV personality after his comments insulting Mexicans.

Macy's said it would phase out Trump's menswear collection, which includes shirts, ties, cuff links and suits and have been sold by the department store since 2004.

"Macy's is a company that stands for diversity and inclusion. We have no tolerance for discrimination in any form," the company said in a statement.

Trump fired back, saying in a statement that it was his decision to end ties with Macy's "because of the pressure being put on them by outside sources." He added that he was not happy that his products were being made in China.

"While selling Trump ties and shirts at Macy's is a small business in terms of dollar volume, my principles are far more important and therefore much more valuable," the Trump Organization said.

Donald Trump / GETTY IMAGES

In a Twitter post, Trump urged followers to stop shopping at Macy's: "Those who believe in tight border security, stopping illegal immigration & SMART trade deals w/other countries should boycott @ Macys."

Macy's follows a handful of television networks in severing ties with Trump after he described migrants from Mexico to the U.S. as drug runners and rapists in a June 16 speech seeking the Republican nomination for president.

One of those was Univision, which last week pulled the July 12 Miss USA pageant, partly owned by Trump. On Tuesday, Trump filed a $500 million lawsuit against the Spanish-language TV network for dropping the event. REUTERS

Quoted

"In light of statements made by Donald Trump, which are inconsistent with Macy's values, we have decided to discontinue our business relationship with Mr. Trump."

Macy's said in a statement

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Pinkett Smith breaks it down for Channing Tatum in "Magic Mike XXL."
WARNER BROS.

THE FUN STARTS HERE

The queen of 'Magic Mike XXL'

Jada Pinkett Smith injects some female dominance into the male stripper franchise — and totally steals the movie.

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Stepping into the scenery-chewing shoes of Matthew McConaughey is certainly a daunting task, but Jada Pinkett Smith was up to the challenge. In fact, she walks into "Magic Mike XXL" and walks right away with the movie. Or struts away with it, to be more precise.

"Nobody can replace Matthew — let's just be real on that. I surely know I can't, with his fine self," Pinkett Smith says. "But I actually didn't feel the pressure, being a woman. If a man had actually played that role, that's a hard act to follow. But because I'm a woman, I knew right away that the audience's minds would have to shift, because there's just no comparison."

For the follow-up to Channing Tatum's partially autobiographical male stripper saga, McConaughey's Dallas has abandoned the boys. In desperate need of a new emcee, they turn to Pinkett Smith's Rome, who runs a private adult entertainment club catering to an exclusively female clientele.

"The role was at first written for a guy," Pinkett Smith reveals. "I was like, 'Channing, why me?' And his whole thing was like, 'Jada, I really feel like in this arena there's a sense of responsibility that we can inject in this idea.' I just really connected to how I wanted women to feel about themselves watching this movie, and adding the energy of exaltation, celebration and inspiration."

Pinkett Smith found a willing and gracious collaborator in Tatum, who also served as a producer. "With Channing, when he wanted to bring me on board, I can almost assure you there were people in the studio and people around that were like, 'Really?' But Channing had a vision," she says. "He has a really high regard for the feminine, and he really felt like, through dance, he understood that this brought women joy. In the first movie, he really explored what isn't so great about the industry itself, so in this movie he had more license to have more fun."

In discussing "Magic Mike XXL," Pinkett Smith takes on a tone of almost religious reverence, which may seem surprising given the subject matter, but she's very serious.

"Rome looks at it as a religion and feels like women can really, truly find themselves through that," she says. "What I brought to the table was the idea of stripping away degradation and really adding a celebratory factor in this act of exaltation. It should never be demeaning, and it should never be about dominance. And so that was really what was important to bring energetically, to kind of elevate the idea of adult entertainment."

Pinkett Smith
GETTY

"What I brought to the table was the idea of stripping away degradation and really adding a celebratory factor in this act of exaltation. It should never be demeaning, and it should never be about dominance."

Tatum back in a thong

The "Magic Mike XXL" star is all for "equal opportunity objectification."

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Channing Tatum, right, with Matt Bomer, reprises his role as a stripper in "Magic Mike XXL." WARNER BROS. PICTURES

At the end of 2012's "Magic Mike," Channing Tatum's reluctant stripper walked away from the biz. But he's back at it in 2015's "Magic Mike XXL," running off with the boys for a road trip to a convention for "male entertainers." One person not back is Matthew McConaughey, though Tatum says that did leave room for some other stars to take his place.

The first "Magic Mike" was based loosely on your past. Did any part of you wind up in the sequel?

A little bit. I did go to a stripper convention twice, actually. We had a road trip, but everything along the road trip in the film we've fictionalized.

Did you miss McConaughey?

I think we all missed him. In my opinion, he was the best part of the movie. So it was definitely a little bittersweet being there without him. But I got it. He works so hard to change people's opinion and viewpoint of him. I think he creatively had done everything he could with that role. He just didn't feel like doing that again, I guess. I get that, I understand.

But you have some new actors in this film, such as Amber Heard.

For me that was one of the lucky things — a happy accident or blessing in disguise. By not having such a big character like McConaughey, lots of other characters come to the front. So we have very strong female characters, Amber being one of them. My favorite part is that you have a beautiful, charismatic, talented woman in the part, and she doesn't have to be a romantic interest. Girls always seem to be sort of defaulted into that role. And I think that one of the most fascinating things that we did with her character was that Mike and this girl meet on the road. It had some sort of context but it's not a sexual one.

Women in Hollywood have to conform to a certain image: young and skinny. Do you think men are getting the same pressure?

I don't know. I think there are all types. I think in reality things are different and not like in movies and magazines. I know a lot of women that like burly lumberjack-looking men. You don't have to have a six-pack to be a good-looking person, in my opinion.

Usually, it's women who are expected to undress and look sexy on screen. Would you consider "Magic Mike XXL" a feminist film?

Feminism is a very hard word. As a man it's tough for me to say and talk about that. I would never talk about being a feminist as I'm not a woman. And I know you can be, but I'm not going to do that now. I just know that I respect them; I think that we're doing our part for "equal opportunity objectification!"

GETTY IMAGES

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A film great's great start

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Lee Kang-sheng (with prominently displayed James Dean poster) poses in a typically cluttered long take in "Rebels of the Neon God." BIG WORLD PICTURES

The legendary Taiwanese minimalist filmmaker Tsai Ming-liang didn't emerge fully formed, but with 1992's "Rebels of the Neon God" he came close. That's remarkable as is. Over the years and the films — including "The Hole," "What Time Is It There?" and last year's "Stray Dogs" — he's established himself as one of the most recognizable voices in cinema. He does the long-take master shot thing, where still images hold for minutes at a time while people do relatively mundane activities. But he mixes in elements like musical numbers, or revisits the same ideas, often with the same actors.

Not all of that is in "Rebels," but a fair amount of it is. Among the Tsai standards there from the start is his most frequent collaborator, actor Lee Kang-sheng, who here plays the same quiet, vaguely befuddled loner he'd play in several more of the director's films. The focus swings between his character's misadventures and those of a pair of young, hipster thieves. Their paths eventually cross, with disastrous/funny results, but the real draw is the long takes, which aren't as epic as they'd get in later films but still rock an unusual cinematic voice. Watching "Rebels of the Neon God" is more than just watching an early film by an untouchable master; it allows you to see his style with newly fresh eyes.

'Rebels of the Neon God'

Director: Tsai Ming-liang
Stars: Lee Kang-sheng, Miao Tien
Rating: NR

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Don't worry, "Infinitely Polar Bear," out Friday, isn't as quirky as this picture. SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

'Infinitely Polar Bear'

Director: Maya Forbes
Stars: Mark Ruffalo, Zoe Saldana
Rating: R

• • • • •

It probably doesn't look it, but the annoying title of "Infinitely Polar Bear" secretly tells you how good it is. It comes from one of the film's two young children learning that her father, played by Mark Ruffalo, has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She hears it as a variation on "polar bear." It's a sign that the film that tells her family's story — based on the experiences of its writer-director, Maya Forbes — will deal in a goofy (but no less strong) form of resilience.

This should be a grim tale; it could have also gone into full-on, misjudged quirk. Instead, it lies somewhere in between — a little too upbeat at times, but always perched over despair.

The plot finds Ruffalo's Cam having to care for his kids on his lonesome after mom (Zoe Saldana) goes off to school, and not doing a great job of it. As Ruffalo plays him, Cam is a big child himself, unable to control his emotions and most alert when he has an excuse to unleash his boyish exuberance. Ruffalo still reins him in just enough that his performance, and the film, doesn't just become a silly lark with no consequences. The film feels levelheaded, even when an upset Cam is giving his two young daughters the double middle finger. MP

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TV watch list

DRAMA

'Wayward Pines'

Ethan's got more troubles coming his way — he finds a bomb hidden in his car. Aside from nearly dying, he also has to worry about who might have put it there. **9 p.m., FOX**

Ethan is on the hunt for whoever attached a bomb to his car. LIANE HENTSCHER, FOX

DRAMA

'Rookie Blue'

Andy isn't sure what to do about her relationship with Sam now that she knows his ex-girlfriend is pregnant, but as usual, her job is there to distract her. This time, she's keeping an eye on a rebellious teenager. **10 p.m., ABC**

TALK SHOWS

'Jimmy Kimmel Live'

Andy Samberg stops by the show to chat about his upcoming tennis docudrama (or maybe we should just call it a mockumentary?), "7 Days in Hell." **11:35 p.m., ABC**

MOVIE

'Avatar'

Remember when everyone got incredibly obsessed with "Avatar"? Relive the heady days of 2009 while watching Sam Worthington hang out with benevolent aliens. **8 p.m., FX**

LISA WEIDENFELD

Painful Varicose Veins & Swollen Legs?

Varicose veins are more than a cosmetic problem. They are associated with **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)** and **Pulmonary Embolism (PE)**, both of which claim up to **300,000 lives** a year in the United States.

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The Italian Market in South Philly is celebrating its 100th anniversary. R. KENNEDY FOR VISIT PHILADELPHIA

Italian Market renaissance

The market is celebrating its 100th anniversary with new restaurants.

A.D. AMOROSI
@ MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Banners throughout South Philadelphia's Italian Market wave in celebration of its 100th anniversary. Beginning with a rush of immigrant businesses a century ago, the place has seemed happily stuck in time, with little change to the street stalls and small shops. New restaurants move in with far less frequency than in its neighboring food district, East Passyunk Avenue. But things are changing: Two new restaurants are coming soon, a legendary restaurant just reopened, one BYOB is getting a liquor license and an established hotspot just got a makeover.

"I can't wait," says Emilio Mignucci, co-owner of DiBruno Bros., which has its original location in the Italian Market. "My family's been here 75 years. I grew up watching it grow — and stagnate — and this is exactly the change I've touted."

Mignucci is so encouraged, he's making plans to open DiBruno's Pronto at Ninth and Montrose as a wine bar/eatery in 2016. "This all brings life to the market, day and night," he says. "You won't have to leave the block for a nightcap."

Expect kushari, an Egyptian macaroni and lentil dish, on Neuf's menu. BOB MOYSAN

Nina's Trattoria owner David Neukirch says his Sicilian restaurant, known for its late-night menu, will keep BYOB as an option but is adding a liquor license as a convenience for guests. "The Italian Market is a gem that needs TLC to take it from good to great. With motivated entrepreneurs coming in, we'll see a great outcome," he predicts.

Neukirch is talking about the guys behind Royal Tavern, Khyber Pass and Cantina Los Caballitos, who re-opened Triangle Tavern as an Italian eatery earlier this summer, as well as the owners of West Philly's Local 44, who will open Coeur, a French-American restaurant, by Labor Day.

There's also Joncarl Lachman of Noord on East Passyunk: His Neuf, a North African-French bistro, is slated to open later this summer.

"I've wanted this space for Neuf since opening Noord," says Lachman, who plans to install a green space in front of Neuf, where empty stalls currently are, to celebrate the Market's 'Cent'anni'. "I have faith in the Italian Market," he says, "and believe it's at a turning point."

The new Triangle Tavern keeps the look of the old. REESE AMOROSI

New and improved

Bibou
1009 S. Eighth St.
The French BYOB redecorated and welcomed back chef Pierre Calmels.

Triangle Tavern
1338 S. 10th St.
Closed for seven years before its reincarnation, this Triangle looks like the old one with its original bar top and its Philly celeb decor. But the food is market-fresh Italian fare with vegetarian and vegan options.

Coeur
824 S. Eighth St.
Little is known about the upcoming Coeur except its hearty Franco-American gastropub fare concept.

Neuf
943 S. Ninth St.
This sexy, candlelit spot will serve carafes of wines from Morocco, and meals such as Bouillabaisse and tagines.

FIREWORKS!

The Philly 4th of July Jam is the main destination on Saturday, but you don't have to join the Parkway masses dancing to The Roots and Miguel to catch the fireworks. Instead, ooh and aah at the display from one of these prime viewing spots. RACHEL VIGODA

Belmont Plateau

Pack a picnic and head to Fairmount Park to "a place called the Plateau where everybody goes" — boom box playing the Fresh Prince optional. If this is your first time finding the Plat, just follow Montgomery Drive until you get to Belmont Mansion Drive. If you're coming from the west, drive north on Belmont Ave. You'll be rewarded with scenic views of the skyline and the fireworks.

TGI Fridays on the Parkway

Our first choice for watching from above the crowds is befriending someone with a roof deck in the Art Museum area. If you don't have time to hunt down new acquaintances before Saturday, TG that Fridays on the Parkway has a roof open to the public, where you can dig into something smothered in Jack Daniels barbecue sauce while you watch the fireworks.

Schuylkill River Trail

The section of the Schuylkill River Trail alongside the city will be one of the best places to see the fireworks, so make your way over there early to claim a spot on the grass for your lawn chair or picnic blanket. The lights reflecting off the water will give this view an extra edge.

Mace's Crossing or McCrossen's Tavern

This one requires a small crowd of your own. Step one: Bring friends to Mace's Crossing at 1721 Cherry or McCrossen's Tavern at 20th and Spring Garden. Step two: Order drinks and hang out. Step three: Take turns stepping outside to enjoy the concert and fireworks while someone else in your group mans the table.

Girard Avenue Bridge

Lean over the water with your summer romance a la Jack and Rose on the Girard Avenue Bridge, west of Boathouse Row over the Schuylkill River. This one is standing room only, and open to cars, so make sure to stay out of the road. Bonus history lesson: The second incarnation of this bridge (we're on the third now) opened July 4, 1874.

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Join the party

MITCH LEFF

Philly 4th of July Jam Concert and Grand Finale Fireworks

Saturday, 7:30 to 11 p.m.
Ben Franklin Pkwy., in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art
Free
www.welcomeamerica.com
Touted as the biggest free concert in the country, the evening jam features Philly's own The Roots, plus Miguel, Jennifer Nettles and yet-to-be-revealed special guests. It all ends with a bang as fireworks soar over the Art Museum.

This weekend we're celebrating Independence Day, the Annual Reminders and The Roots.

Independence Day BBQ Celebration

Thursday, 6 p.m.
International House
3701 Chestnut St.
$5-1$2, 215-387-5125
www.ihousephilly.org.
I-House residents and members of the community unite for a good old-fashioned barbecue celebration, with hot dogs, hamburgers, rock 'n' roll and games for the whole family.

National LGBT 50th Anniversary Celebration:

National Legal Panel

Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
National Museum of American Jewish History
101 S. Independence Mall East
Free, 215-923-3811
www.nmajh.org
In honor of the 50th anniversary of the first Annual Reminder, the NMAJH hosts a panel to discuss LGBT rights in the context of history, the present and what's to come. Seats are first come, first served.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's Free Neighborhood Concert

Thursday, 8 p.m.
Great Plaza at Penn's Landing
211 S. Columbus Blvd.
Free, 215-893-1999
www.philorch.org
The orchestra kicks off its holiday weekend concert with the "Star-Spangled Banner" and closes with the "1812 Overture." Fireworks will burst in the sky at the end of this patriotic performance.

Philly @ The Movies: 'The Sixth Sense'

Thursday, 9 p.m.
Rittenhouse Square
210 W. Rittenhouse Square
Free
www.welcomeamerica.com
It may not be patriotic per se, but this movie has a Philly connection. "The Sixth Sense" was written and directed by local M. Night Shyamalan, and is set here. The outdoor screening is part of the Wawa Welcome America July 4 festivities.

All American Celebration

Thursday-Sunday
National Constitution Center
525 Arch St.
Free July 2 and 4
$8-$13 July 3 and 5
215-409-6700
www.constitutioncenter.org
All kinds of fun, family-friendly, July 4-themed events are happening at the National Constitution Center over the weekend, including theatrical performances and flag-making workshops.

Pops on Independence

Friday, 8 p.m.
Independence Hall
520 Chestnut St.
Free, 215-893-1999
www.phillypops.org
The Philly POPS will perform an open-air concert conducted by director Michael Krajewski, featuring Broadway's Capathia Jenkins and Darius De Haas. "God Bless America," "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Stars and Stripes Forever" will be among the all-American songs played.

THE MARGARET S. HALLORAN
FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMMING SERIES
AT THE PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY

Wednesday, July 8, 10:30 a.m.
The Lion's Whiskers performed by Catskill Puppet Theatre
In this Ethiopian tale, a stepmother shows love, courage and patience, as she takes on a quest to pluck a wild lion's whiskers. Masks, puppets and original songs help tell the tale.
This special program is part of the MARGARET S. HALLORAN FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMMING SERIES at the Parkway Central Library.

Wednesday, July 15, 10:30 a.m.
Become Your Dreams (A History of Hip-Hop) with Illstyle & Peace
Did you know that Hip-Hop can trace its roots back 50 years? Persevere and pay attention (and dance), and you too can "Think it – Do it – and Become it!"
This special program is part of the MARGARET S. HALLORAN FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMMING SERIES at the Parkway Central Library.

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DEVON DOOLEY

Liberty Block Party

Friday, 1 to 8:30 p.m.
Fifth to Sixth streets between Market and Chestnut
Free
www.welcomeamerica.com
The biggest block party of the summer is an excellent opportunity to get a taste of Philly's food scene and feast your ears on live music. There's no better place to celebrate the birth of our nation than in historic Old City, surrounded by Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

Celebration of Freedom Ceremony

Saturday, 10 a.m.
Sixth and Chestnut streets, on the steps of Independence Hall
Free
www.welcomeamerica.com
Philly is celebrating freedom with music, readings of excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and inspirational commentary, all in honor of some very big milestones, including the 50th anniversary of the first organized gay rights protest in the U.S., the 50th of the Voting Rights Act, the 50th of the Immigration and Nationality Act and the 150th of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

Party on the Parkway

Saturday, noon to 7 p.m.
Ben Franklin Parkway, from 20th St. to Eakins Oval
Free
www.welcomeamerica.com
This daylong fest spans the Parkway with music, games, entertainment and food. It's a family-friendly July 4 blowout, leading up to the big concert.

'The Signing: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Freedom'

Saturday, 8:30 p.m.
Tattooed Mom
530 South St.
Free, 215-238-9880
www.tattooedmomphilly.com
Creatures of the Night are putting on a play about the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. In this historical revision, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams are struggling to write a final draft of the document — so Franklin travels through time to gather insight from iconic American figures such as Betsy Ross, Abe Lincoln, Marilyn Monroe and Jimi Hendrix.

Independence Day Parade

Saturday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Starting at Fifth and Chestnut streets
www.welcomeamerica.com
Join more than 6,000 people in the nation's most historic square mile. There will be marching bands, floats, members of the military and a cameo by Miss America.

KATI PRIVITERA

The Annual Reminders Block Party

Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Chestnut to Pine streets, between 11th and Broad
Free, 215-875-9288
www.phillygaypride.org
The celebratory street festival organized by Philly Pride includes a dedication of the new rainbow crosswalks in the Gayborhood. Come for the food, drink and party atmosphere.

MICHELE ZIPKIN

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Celebrate freedom for free at NMAJH! Watch the parade from the Museum's outdoor terrace and tour the Museum using a special Independence Day Family Guide. View an original letter written by George Washington to the Jewish community of Newport, Rhode Island and enjoy interactive exhibits, story times, and patriotic arts and crafts projects.
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If you think laughter is the best medicine, head up to Montreal between July 8 and July 28 to take the cure at the Just for Laughs Festival.

Now in its 33rd year, Just for Laughs has built a gigantic international reputation for bringing together the biggest and best names in comedy.

Holding the record for the highest number of tickets ever sold at JFL, **Dave Chappelle** returns to perform no fewer than seven shows at Theatre Maisonneuve (July 20–23), while one of comedy's biggest movie stars is, rather surprisingly, making his first appearance at the festival in "An Evening with **Mike Myers**." And **Kevin Hart** is on course to be performing the biggest individual indoor show in the festival's history, at the Bell Centre on July 24.

Twelve gala events are to be hosted by **Neil Patrick Harris, Trevor Noah, Norm MacDonald, Jane Lynch, Wanda Sykes, Sir Patrick Stewart, Ellie Kemper** and **Alan Cumming**, and other headliners include **Bill Burr, Patton Oswalt, Chris Hardwick, Jason Reitman** and **"Weird Al" Yankovic**.

Comedians from around the world — 19 countries, to be exact — are a big part of the festival, particularly in "The Ethnic Show" at Club Soda (July 8–19), hosted by **Alonzo Bodden**, with **Gina Yashere, Ahmed Ahmed, Frank Spadone, Ronny Chieng, Dan Naturman** and **Rachid Badouri**. British-Iranian actor-comedian, **Omid Djalili**, has his own show, "Iranalamadingdong."

> **Kevin Hart will be performing the biggest individual indoor show in the festival's history.**

There are themed shows, too, so if you think relationship issues are a hoot, check out "Date Night" with **Brent Morin, Orny Adams, Debra DiGiovanni** and **Tom Papa**. If plain speaking has greater appeal, "The Nasty Show" has hilarious malcontents like **Mike Wilmot** and **Gilbert Gottfried**, and the oft-outrageous **Jimmy Carr** taking the stage to rip at various subjects in the bluntest terms. To get a peek at where Canadian humor is headed, "Homegrown Comics," hosted by **Shaun Majumder**, is a contest for up-and-coming Canadian comedians.

Alongside all the shows, you'll find plenty going on for free out on the streets of Montreal, including street performers, family fun, music and art. The highlight, on July 21, is a free open-air concert by "Weird Al" Yankovic, the 2015 Grammy winner for Best Comedy Album.

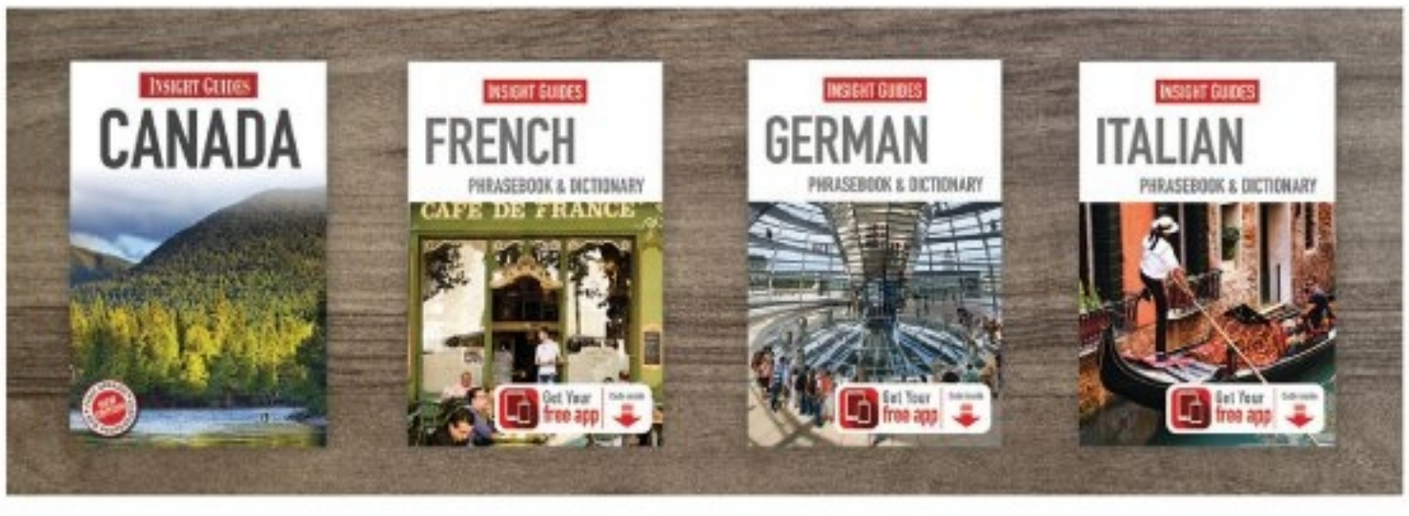
INSIGHT GUIDES | PENNY PHENIX

For more information and tickets visit www.hahaha.com.

Off-JFL

Cheap laughs

Not all of the shows are big-ticket items, and you'll find names you recognize — **Colin Jost** of "Saturday Night Live," **Wyatt Cenac** of "The Daily Show," **Ari Shaffir** and many more — at surprisingly good prices in intimate venues hosting Off-JFL events.



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A cool summer break in Burlington

Church Street Marketplace is the heart of downtown and the host of events like the annual Festival of Fools.

With a lakefront location, a revitalized downtown, a vibrant university scene and a strong business sector, Burlington, Vermont, consistently ranks as one of the most livable cities in the country.

Lake Champlain is the epicenter for recreation. Waterfront Park and Battery Park are the town's popular outdoor hangouts with picnic tables, lots of green space and access to the 12-mile hike and bike path along a former railroad right-of-way. You can rent kayaks, rowboats and Boston Whalers, or take a sightseeing or dinner cruise. Don't miss ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center (**www.echovermont.org**). The views of the lake from the observation deck alone are worth the visit, but the exhibits are as fun as they are fascinating. You can explore a submerged shipwreck remotely and help feed the resident critters.

Downtown Burlington is a gem, with more than 200 restored buildings. Preservation Burlington has a self-guided walking tour on its website (**www.preservationburlington.org**). Church Street Marketplace is the heart of downtown. It's the venue for events and festivals like the Festival of Fools, an annual gathering of international street performers, July 31 to Aug. 2. The plaza is surrounded by unique shops, restaurants and businesses, most of them independently owned.

The nearby enclosed Burlington Town Center has the familiar national chains. The Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, a restored Art Deco movie palace, is the stage for theatrical performances and music concerts. Check the schedule at **www.flynncenter.org**.

On the University of Vermont campus, you'll find paintings by American masters and an extensive collection of Native American art and artifacts at the Robert Hull Fleming Museum. Revolutionary patriot Ethan Allen hailed from this region. His homestead is five miles north of town. You can pay your respects at his grave in Greenmount Cemetery on the UVT campus.

Vermont's official website, **www.vermont.org**, has a section dedicated to Burlington and its environs.

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Letters to the editor

Make Trump eat his words

Donald Trump must not have paid attention in his history classes because he would have known that there were miscreants coming to America from every society. Some of those coming from England on the Mayflower had probably been incarcerated for treason and other offenses. Has he forgotten all the ethnic mafias that thrived in America until they became legitimate businesses? I know here in Harlem, where the Mexicans have restaurants, they are clean and polite. The next time Trump is in Harlem, he should stop by a Jimbo's and see if what he said is true. Are you willing to eat your words?

ERNESTINE MORRISON

Bad move, SCOTUS

A divided U.S. Supreme Court, in an opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito, decided that Oklahoma may continue with lethal injections. (The case is Glossip v. Gross.) One can understand the motivation behind support of these executions: The petitioners committed horrible crimes. However, as a civilized society, we must seek to be better than those who have committed horrible crimes. As it stands, the risk of enormous suffering during an execution remains unacceptably high, and five of the Supreme Court justices chose to simply look the other way.

ILYA ABLAVSKY, VIA EMAIL

Wednesday's answer

Y	O	L	K		C	L	A	D		B	A	S	I	L
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WANT FREEDOM FRIES WITH THAT?

Opinion

TOM FOREMAN

CNN CORRESPONDENT AND AUTHOR OF THE UPCOMING BOOK "MY YEAR OF RUNNING DANGEROUSLY: A DAD, A DAUGHTER, AND A RIDICULOUS PLAN."

Busy journalist that I am, I was surfing the Internet for "Australia's Deadliest Animals!" and "Hilarious Cheerleader Fails!" when I happened across an odd item. A recent poll from the esteemed Pew Research Center found only 43 percent of Germans think America respects personal freedom.

"The nerve!" I said to my wife when I got home from work.

"Does it say why?" Linda asked.

"I didn't read that far. But I think the White House should get busy tapping some phone lines to figure out who is badmouthing us in Berlin."

"Hmmm," she said. "Think about what you just said."

Heaven knows what she meant. In any event, the next day I looked the study over more closely, and found that a few years ago our German pals gave us a huge thumbs-up on the freedom front — 82 percent positive. Since then, however, our numbers have plunged all over Europe — from the U.K. and Spain to Italy and France as well. This is distressing in the run-up to the annual festival of Frisbees, flags and fireworks called the 4th of July. (Well, in the case of England, I suppose I can understand…)

For crying out loud, we value freedom so much we let the Bachelorette send "Cupcake" packing even though we knew he was THE ONE; so much we're allowing every person over the age of 35 to run for the Republican presidential nomination; so much that one of those candidates, Sen. Ted Cruz, was on TV talking about once watching porn with members of the Supreme Court. Porn!

But that's not good enough for the sock and sandal-wearing Germans, who apparently have their lederhosen in a twist over Edward Snowden, secret data collection and a little good-natured eavesdropping on their Chancellor. "Barack? Is that you? Come on, I can hear you breathing…"

Still, the same poll found half of Americans also think the government here does not value freedom as much as it used to. Something to think about as the hot dogs — or should I say frankfurters? — sizzle on the grill.

CNN=POLITICS

Sudoku: Easy and hard

		5		1			6	
	1		3	6		9		
6					4		5	
1				2		4		
	4	2				7	3	
		8		3				1
	9		2					8
		3		9	1		2	
	8			7		3		

	9			3	7		4	
		5			9			6
3			4	2			9	
		2		7		9		
		3				1		
		7		6		5		
	3			9	4			8
7			1			6		
	2		7	8			1	

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Horoscope

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22
Social gatherings will be a unique source of entertainment. Noticing how people react in various situations will give you insight into your own behavior.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22
Overindulgence will lead to neglect. There are lots of groups that will help you get back on track with healthy food choices and exercise. Friends will provide support and motivation.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Start fresh. Join a group, club or organization that will provide an interesting diversion from your daily grind. If dancing isn't your thing, try out a new sport.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22
Be careful what you say. You will be upset and disappointed if someone you have trusted reveals personal details. Don't allow anyone to take advantage.

♏ Scorpio |Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Others will be more than willing to cooperate if you let them. Trying to do too much on your own will make you anxious. Ask for help when you need it.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your enthusiasm for your current professional goals will make loved ones feel ignored. You should put time aside to concentrate solely on the people closest to you.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20 A relationship or misunderstanding will catch you by surprise. If you have misinterpreted the signals being sent your way, open up a dialogue to get to the heart of the situation.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18 The temptation to try something risky may be strong, but weighing the consequences ahead of time will ensure that you don't get burned.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20
Any sound advice or knowledge you receive now should be put to good use. Trying out new experiences and meeting new people will add to your expertise.

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♈ Aries | March 21-April 20
Go over financial, legal or personal contracts in detail to avoid making a costly mistake. Time is on your side, and fact-finding will ease your mind.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21
Travel or educational pursuits will broaden your outlook and inspire your imagination. If you open your eyes to new possibilities, you will find new ways to use your skills.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20
Finishing home-improvement projects will give you peace of mind and some free time to help others. Your kindness and understanding will result in greater popularity.

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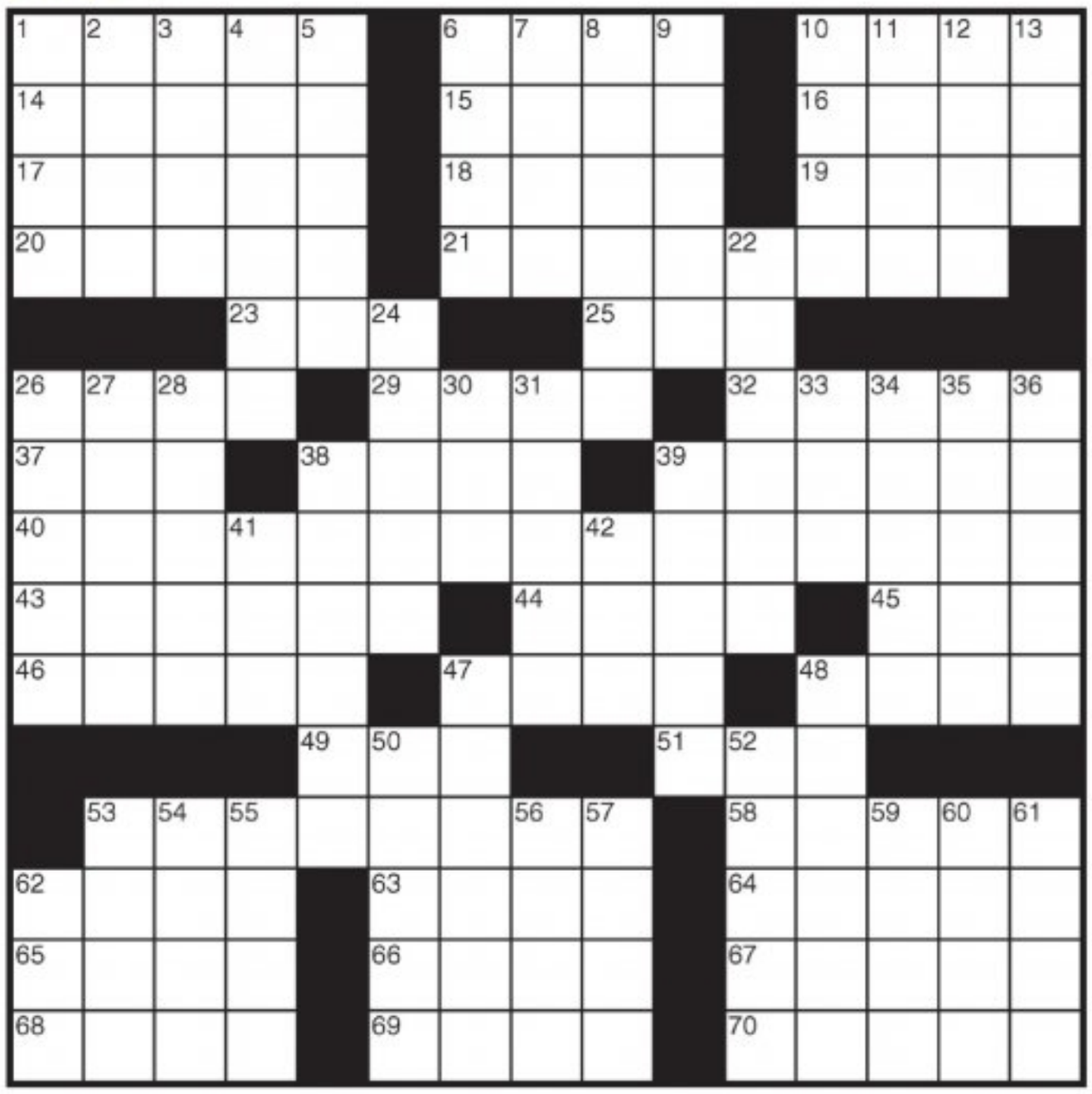

Across

1 Wild party
6 Labor Dept. division
10 Smidgen
14 Pep
15 Blemish
16 Raise cane?
17 Bell tower
18 Falafel bean
19 Frighten a fly
20 It repels moths
21 Take the first step (2 wds.)
23 Part of WWW
25 Bridal notice word
26 Cow's bellow
29 "Lost Horizon" role
32 Gnat
37 Bullring yell
38 "Mondo Cane" theme
39 Goes rancid
40 Dinosaur and gnats (2 wds.)
43 Fission alternative
44 Desires
45 — kwon do
46 Last box to check
47 Ice sheet
48 Sock hop locales
49 Just scrape by
51 Lobster eggs
53 Bored note-takers
58 Portrait
62 Door post
63 Seine vistas
64 Like a tablet
65 Hodgepodge
66 Groovy
67 Between, in Paris
68 — noire
69 Screws things up
70 Ready to bake

Down

1 Autumn pear
2 Long, easy stride
3 In the thick of
4 Flop down
5 Over yonder
6 Switch positions
7 Chair-back piece
8 Cuba's capital
9 Plugged-in
10 In that case (2 wds.)
11 Molokai neighbor
12 Pony's gait
13 —, amas, amat
22 Lures
24 -- up (inflated)
26 Successful, on Broadway
27 Walrus hunter
28 Cardiff natives
30 Electric bridge
31 Ms. Streep
33 Debt memo
34 Grubby
35 Faint flicker
36 Snake shapes
38 At anchor
39 Less bananas
41 Kind of detector
42 Help-wanted abbr.
47 Antenna
48 Sign after Taurus
50 "Dave" actor
52 Tanker
53 Cartoon chipmunk
54 Jump over
55 Plaintive reed
56 Tail end
57 Mach 1 breakers
59 Formic acid producers
60 "Primal Fear" star
61 Utopia
62 Income source

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SPORTS

Future Phillies

Five Phils are MiLB All-Stars

With the major league club in peril, the future of the franchise is not as bleak, with five players from Double-A Reading named to the Eastern League All-Star Game. The list is headlined by baseball's No. 2 prospect J.P. Crawford and includes Roman Quinn, Zach Eflin and others.

FANTASY HOOPS: DRAFT PICKS YOU SHOULD TARGET

You guys aren't going to believe this. The Knicks took the "Next Dirk" in last week's draft! By now, we've learned that it's not easy to be the "Next Dirk." There have been 16 European lottery picks since 2002, and zero have made the All-Star game. So while Kristaps Porzingis is ticketed for heavy playing time as a rookie, he's not a player worth targeting in fantasy drafts.

Russell isn't a bad pickup — but he will be playing behind Kobe Bryant in Los Angeles. / GETTY IMAGES

NFL news

The rumor that the Broncos discussed trading Peyton Manning to the Texans is not that far-fetched. From Week 11 onward last season, Peyton was a sub-average quarterback — and it wasn't just because of a quad injury. If the Broncos could get a haul for a 39-year-old player, they should do it. New coach Gary Kubiak is going to reduce Peyton's volume sharply this year anyway, installing a run-based attack around C.J. Anderson.

Three towers

At this point in the rebuilding process, the Sixers are not in a place to draft for position. They could only take the best player available in Jahlil Okafor — even if it meant that their core is three bigs. It's still easy to project Okafor for 32-35 minutes per game immediately as there are 96 minutes available at the post spots and Joel Embiid's status is unknown. Okafor is the most polished offensive post player we've seen in a long time, and he landed on a team that will run offense through him on nearly every possession. He's the oddsmakers' favorite for Rookie of the Year.

Running in mud

The Nuggets and Ty Lawson are heading for a messy divorce. The separation papers were filed when the team used the No. 7 overall pick on powerful 6-foot-5 PG Emmanuel Mudiay, a special athlete in the mold of Derrick Rose who will fit perfectly with the up-tempo style new coach Mike Malone wants to play. Mudiay will have free reign from his first day in Denver as the team has one of the league's weakest rosters. Expect some flirtations with triple-doubles as he pushes for 35 minutes.

La La Land

It was easy to see D'Angelo Russell's natural NBA-caliber ability at Ohio State. As an 18-year-old freshman, he averaged 19.3 points, 5.7 rebounds, 5.0 assists, 2.7 treys and 1.6 steals per game. He's below Okafor and Mudiay for fantasy because he has to share usage with Kobe Bryant, Jordan Clarkson, Julius Randle and possibly a free agent. He's still going to display his roto-friendly game and could explode if Kobe gets injured again.

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Did Phillies err

Jayson Werth, left, provides a rare combination of speed and power in the middle of a batting order. / GETTY IMAGES

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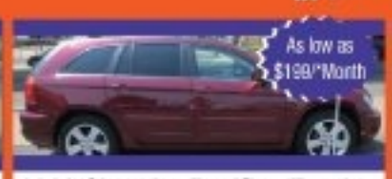
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not paying Werth?

MLB. The Phillies may have made the right financial decision in letting Jayson Werth walk, but the team has certainly missed his presence ever since.

Werth-iness

The Phillies and Nationals more or less swapped their fates when Jayson Werth left for Washington.

- With Jayson Werth, the Phillies won four division titles and averaged just about 92 wins per season (with a 371-277 record).
- Without Werth, excluding a 101-win 2011 season (four-aces year), the Phils have gone 254-311 in four and a half seasons since.
- The Nationals went from averaging just 65 wins in 2007-2010 to 90 in 2011-2014 with Werth.

Coincidence or not, there's a common link between the decline of the Phillies, who have been so dismal this season Ryne Sandberg couldn't take it anymore, and the Washington Nationals, who currently lead the NL East (a division once dominated by the Phillies not so long ago).

Maybe it would've played out the same anyway. Maybe the young Nats, with all that pitching and offensive talent, would've eventually come of age. Maybe the Phils would've inevitably hit the skids. We'll never know for sure. But the Nats are sure glad Jayson Werth came over to their side.

"He brought a certain swagger over here and they lost that swagger at the same time," said shortstop Ian Desmond, who arrived in September 2009 when the Nats were in the process of losing 103 games, finishing 34 games behind the first-place Phillies. "They kind of underestimated his value. I think a couple of other players have said that publicly. When he left they lost a little bit of their heartbeat."

Not right away, though. After helping get the 2010 Phils back to the NLCS for the third straight year, the then 31-year-old Werth turned down the Phils relatively modest offer to sign a monster seven-year, $126 million deal with the Nationals. Considering the number of injuries that has marred his Washington career — most recently a fractured wrist injury that has sidelined him since May 15 — it's difficult to argue the Phillies did not make a smart business decision.

All the Nats know is what a boost he not only gave their lineup but their confidence.

"Our guys have matured," said second baseman Danny Espinosa, who came up during a 69-93 campaign in 2010 before Werth's arrival resulted in the Nats going 80-81 in 2011 (they won the division a year later). "Obviously we made some key acquisitions as well. That helps. You've gotta get your big free agent. Signing a Jayson Werth allows another one to want to come to a winning atmosphere."

Or to plant the seeds for what quickly turned into a losing one.

"Jayson was a lot bigger hit to them than people thought, because he gave Ryan Howard and the middle of that lineup protection," explained Espinosa. "You played the Phillies and would go 1-2-3-4 [Jimmy Rollins, Shane Victorino, Chase Utley, Howard] and forget Jayson was hitting fifth. You didn't have a break in the lineup. They lost him and then had injuries to Doc [Roy Halladay] and Cliff Lee. Before that this was the toughest team to beat. It was hell playing against them. With their pitching staff they had three of the top five pitchers in the league. You always caught one of their best guys."

Now it's the Nats who in a given series can throw some combination of Max Scherzer, Gio Gonzalez, Stephen Strasburg, Jordan Zimmermann and Doug Fister at you, while the Phillies scuffle on a nightly basis. Now it's the Nats who fill their ballpark and even bring a following up here.

They've sure come a long way from the lowly team the Phils beat here in back-to-back years to clinch the division.

"I remember coming in here," said Desmond. "Sold-out stadium. White towels everywhere. It was the most exciting place to play baseball. We wanted to be them. We wanted to beat them. It was frustrating. At the same time there was a little envy. But baseball's a cyclical game and sometimes the tables turn."

Would they have turned quite so drastically had Jayson Werth not left the Phils for the Nats? Maybe it would've been Werth finding out.

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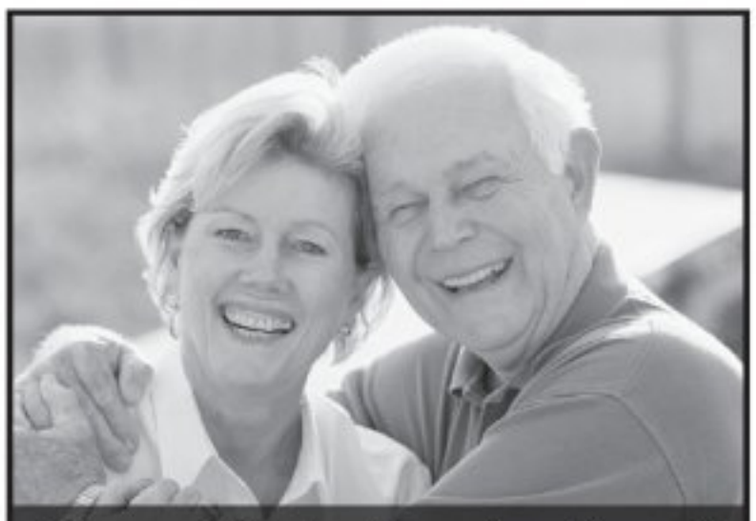

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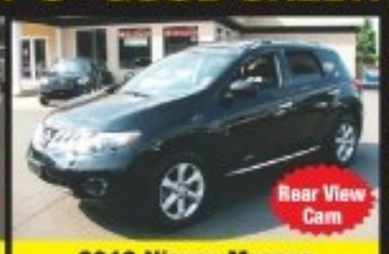

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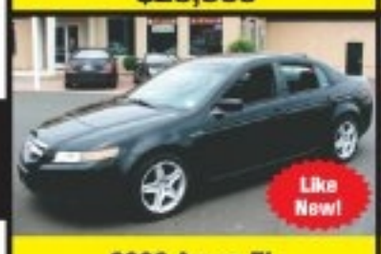

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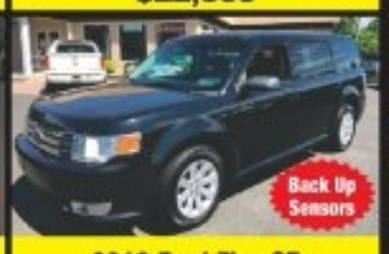

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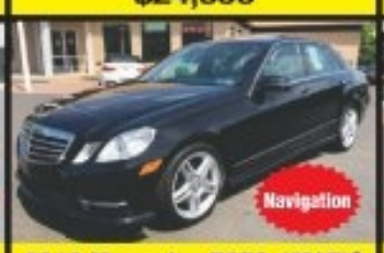

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